

# News Release

---

**For Immediate Release:**

Oct. 27, 2014

**Contact:**

Matt Pelikan, Coastal Ecologist  
The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts  
[mpelikan@tnc.org](mailto:mpelikan@tnc.org), 508-693-6287 Ext. 11

Sara N. da Silva Quintal  
Restoration Ecologist, Watershed Protection  
Buzzards Bay Coalition  
[quintal@savebuzzardsbay.org](mailto:quintal@savebuzzardsbay.org), 508-999-6363 Ext. 225

## **Oyster Restoration Project Set for Review by Fairhaven Board of Selectmen on Nov. 3**

*The public discussion of the project, proposed for Little Bay, will take place at a meeting at Fairhaven Town Hall.*

At its Nov. 3 meeting, the [Fairhaven Board of Selectmen](#) will consider approval of an oyster restoration project proposed for Little Bay in Fairhaven.

The meeting will take place at 6 p.m. at Fairhaven Town Hall at 40 Center St. Public comments and questions on the project are welcome at the meeting.

Proposed by the Town of Fairhaven Shellfish Department, the Buzzards Bay Coalition, and The Nature Conservancy, the goal of the project is to establish a permanent, self-sustaining oyster population that will improve water quality, provide habitat and enhance the public oyster fishery.

The Town's [Fairhaven Marine Resources Committee](#) reviewed the proposed restoration project on Oct. 23.

### **PROJECT DETAILS**

The project is proposed to take place during summer 2015. It involves placement of 100 cubic yards of aged sea clam shells, or "cultch," onto the bottom about 150 yards offshore in the bay. The shell will provide a hard surface that larval oysters can attach to, a step that is necessary for oysters to reach maturity.

While naturally occurring oyster larvae may colonize the project, the plan is to introduce hatchery-raised oysters onto the site, through a process known as "remote set," in order to ensure that the site is strongly colonized.

Once the project is completed, the project will be completely underwater. It will be managed by the Fairhaven shellfish department.

Oysters will improve water clarity by filtering organic debris from the water. Clearer water, in turn, will allow more light to reach bottom-dwelling plants, which are an important part of the marine ecosystem.

The structurally complex oyster reef will offer shelter and habitat to a wide range of fish and invertebrates, enhancing the bay's diversity and biological productivity. The oysters, when they reach maturity, will spawn more oysters into the surrounding waters, multiplying the benefits of the project and helping support the local oyster fishery. The town may allow limited harvest from the project itself, as well, once the oysters have matured.

The Nature Conservancy has secured funding for the project, which will also rely on the expertise and resources of the town shellfish department. The Buzzards Bay Coalition, for many years a leader in research and education around Buzzards Bay, will lead outreach to keep the community informed on the progress of the project, and will assist with scientific aspects of project design and monitoring.

The Conservancy and partners recently completed a similar project in the towns of Chilmark and West Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard. The Fairhaven site was chosen for this project because of its good water quality, suitable physical conditions for cultch placement, and the presence of a large and well-managed shellfishery in the town.

###

---

*The Nature Conservancy is the leading conservation organization working around the world to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. The Conservancy and its more than 1 million members have protected nearly 120 million acres worldwide. Visit The Nature Conservancy on the Web at [www.nature.org/mass](http://www.nature.org/mass)*